

A  
L E T T E R

SENT FROM  
A Countrey Gentleman to  
a Friend, a Member of the House  
of *COMMONS*:

Concerning the taking of *Marlsborough*.  
Of the disorders of the Parliament Souldiers;  
perswading to an *Accommodation*.



Printed in the Yeare.

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B E T T E R

SENT FROM

A Country Gentleman to

His Majesty's Most Excellent  
Council of Commanders

Concerning the taking of Malabar

On the 10th of the Parliament Session  
in the year 1641



A Letter from a Countrey Gentleman to a  
Friend, a Member of the House of *Commons*.

S I R,

I Have received your passionate Letter, and must confesse my selfe  
extreamly moved by it, but not altogether your way; there is  
not an expression in the first part, to which my heart consents nor:  
'tis indeed a sad and miserable condition we are fallen into, to be  
weltring one in anothers blood, before we know why we are angry;  
and to see our Houses and Towns fired, and our Neighbours and  
Friends taken Prisoners, by men who do not onely speak the same  
language with us, but are of our own Families, and of the same (or  
seeme to be of the same) Religion; so that (as you say) you may well  
wonder, how men who take such different wayes, can pretend they  
desire the same ends. I have thus farre kept you company very wil-  
lingly, with the same grief and amazement, but when you seeme to  
lay this fault wholly upon the King and his followers (whom you  
accuse of great rapine, cruelty, and inhumanity;) you must give me  
leave to dissent from you upon such reasons as (if I have not for-  
feited the esteem I have had with you will make some impression in  
you.

You know how farre I have alwayes concurred with you, and  
swayed by the singular regard I have had of your wisdom and inte-  
grity, given up much of my understanding to your Authority, and  
upon that score you know have done somewhat my own judgement  
would not now warrant, very much to the service of the Parlia-  
ment, from whom I received publique thanks; and therefore I had  
reason to expect more protection, at least lesse dammage from any  
forces maintained and imployed by them, then from the Kings Ar-  
my, with whom I could not but know my selfe to be in a just preju-  
dice;

dice; and when you know now that I have been visited by the Souldiers of both Armies, you will beleeve me a competent Reporter of their behaviours.

It was my turn first to receive your Troopers, 300 of them being quartered at this Town, no fewer then 30 disposed themselves to my house; I received them as friends, and you know am not usually very ill provided for the entertainment of as good a company: many of them were Commanders, and undertook to tell me, my affection was very eminent to the Persons who imployed them, so that I confesse I looked for no other pressures from them, then the charge of that nights receiving them.

And 'tis true they left me the next morning, but so unhandsome-ly, that besides the insolency of finding fault, and commanding all my servants, (having used my self and my children with great pride and incivility) they spoyled more of my goods of all sorts, then they had spent, (though they must confesse they wanted nothing but the honesty to deserve it) and pilfered and stole many things of value, telling me to my face, that it was necessary to make that waste, that the Cavaliers might be disappointed: And indeed the night following the Cavaliers came, double the number to my house, that had been there before, commanded onely by the Coronet of the Troops, (whereas of the other there were not fewer then ten Officers, whereof four were Captains) you will imagin the trim usage I had from those, who told me they came to defend me, had not left me courage to stand the shock of another entertainment of those, who could not but heare somewhat of me, which might expose me to their fury, at least would justifie any excessse towards me; I gave direction they should be as well treated as my store would beare, though in truth the villence of the fore-runners had not left me ordinary provision for horse or man, and withdrew my self to that honest Parsons house, who disputed with you when you were last here; and was by him privately sheltered (though many Souldiers were then with him too) from discovery.

The Company removed the next morning, and they were not gone two houres from my house before I returned thither, where I assure you I found all things as orderly, as unspoyled, as if my best friends had been my guests, and one of my servants told me, that he had rather meet with 100. Cavaliers, then 10 Round-heads: 'tis true, they had as good provision for themselves and their horses as could be made, which they received with so much Civility to all my servants, as if they thought themselves beholding to them for it (though it was much worse then had been given the day before) and departed without the least disorder.

For the businesse of *Marleborough*, which you say was carryed with so much fiercenesse and barbarity in firing and plundering the Town, I beleeeve you have not that relation so perfectly, and ingeniously made to you, as in truth the matter will beare; you must thinke my information is not partiall on the Kings part, when I receive it from one who fled to a friends house of mine for shelter, and lost at least the value of 300 l. by the Kings Souldiers in that Town.

You know well how that Town hath behaved it self all this year, in raising great summes of money against the King (for that the Army which hath given him Bartell, is not against him, can no longer be understood) in gathering and exercising Souldiers, as if they desired any Enemy, how they seized upon His Majesties provisions, bought and paid for by His Commissary of the victuals for the supply of *Reading*, and would not suffer them to be carryed thither: The King could not but thinke of reducing this place, and to that purpose sent the Lieutenant General of His Horse (a Gentleman, whatever vote you please to passe upon him, of great reputation in the Countreys through which he passes, for his sober government of his charge), with Instructions, most suitable to his nature, That if his reception into that Town, was such as became them to give, he should suffer no violence to be exercised by the Souldiers, but should bring away the Arms which had been so

ill used, and some seditious Persons who had infected that place, and put His Majestie to that trouble, with some other directions that sufficiently expressed a care of that people, and a willingnesse to believe them in the number of His Subjects.

When this piece of the Army (the reputation of which might well have dispersed that rabble) by slow marches, had brought it self within a little distance of the Town, a fellow sent by the foolish Knave *Franklin*, who they say hath brought all this calamity upon a place he hath been long in spoyling, came to them with a ridiculous Letter of advise, to a person of Honour amongst them,

The Messenger who might have expected worse usage, was brought before the Lieutenant Generall, who caused all the men to be ranged before him, then asked him, whether he thought the strength of that Town could resist that force, the fellow answered, it could not resist a quarter of that power: Get your wayes then (said that Gentleman) to your friends, and tell them what you have scene, if they throw down their Armes, and submit themselves to His Majestie, they shall be used like friends, and receive no prejudice by the Souldiers, but if they make resistance, and force us to enter the Town in blood, it will not be in my power to preserve them. The man returned, did his errand in the presence of him who gives me this account, and who immediately fled, when he found the perversnesse of that *Franklin* would neither submit to the advice, or suffer it to be communicated to the rest of the Town: When the Army advanced, all possible resistance was made, and many Souldiers of the Kings dangerously wounded, out at windows, and from their works, insomuch as they were compelled to burn some houses, in which Musqueteers were placed to give fire upon them.

Thinke sadly with your selves, how your Army (which committed such outrages and plundrings in the poore Citie of *Winchester*, where the Gates were opened to them, and no shew of resistance made by the people of that place) would have required such opposition, nay was it ever known, that after such a contention lesse then



a slaughter of the Enemy, and a sacking of the Town followed? yet as there was nothing of the first here, so there was so little of the other (and yet more I beleeve then the Commanders could have wished) that they have onely cause to curse those who drew such visitants to them.

But no more of these particulars, let us rather raise a compassion one towards another out of the consideration of these miseries, and to what height they will in a short time be improved, then contract a bitterness, and hatred against those with whom we must live happily, if there be any hope of happiness left for this poore Kingdom.

You will thinke this a strange dialect for me to use, whom you have known to concurre with the fiercest men in the fiercest resolutions; but if you were out of the House of Commons, where all Arguments tending one way, beget a generall consent in opinion, and so whatever is thought casie is concluded lawfull, and spent one Moneth with me in the Countrey (though you know it is a place was never fondly devoted to the Kings command) you would observe a strange dejection in the spirits of the people, and if I am not cozened, an inquisitiveness, by questions they did not use to aske, *who raised Arms first? why they did it? what the Common-wealth wanted? whether the King hath denied any thing was not in his lawfull power to deny? whether the preferring half a score persons (for they say, all these calamities have grown from no more, and some will undertake to name them) be of that value, that so many widows must be made, so many children fatherlesse, and such a desolation brought upon the whole Kingdom for them?* with the like questions, which in a little time may raise such a storm, as the cunning and power of both houses cannot allay.

'Tis true, they do yet yield some obedience to the terrible war-rants which summon them to appeare with their Arms in your commands, but with such grumbling, and unwillingnesse, such a peremptorinesse not to fight, that I should thinke my self very unsafe with a guard of 5000. of them.

Let me tell you, since the businesse at *Edge hill*, the inclinations

even of the hottest men in our Countrey are strangely startled and perplexed, nor with the sense of being beaten ( whether that were so, or to such a degree, is not materiall ) but with the apprehension of the known extream visible danger the person of the King ( whom we had all so often sworn to defend, and for the preservation of whose person the Countrey people beleaved even this Army to be raised ) was that day in ; beleave it you will never be able more to perswade them, that so many Canon and Musket shot were made at him for the safety of his Person.

And these Considerations do not onely make impression in us here, but have had a great influence with men whose Affection, and courage you do not suspect. I assure you one of your chiefe Leaders ( you will easily guesse the man by what he hath since done, told me, and he told it me in the hearing of four or five of your most active friends ) that in a week after that battel he slept not an houre with the horrour of the thought, what it was to kill the King, and had that agony of soule about him, that he would not endure again so long for the greatest preferment in the Kingdom.

One of the standers by ( who used that industry to gather up the Arms about the Field, and sent them to you to *Warwicke* ) sharply answered him, If he had gone to bed in his right minde, he would have dreamed that he was rescuing the King out of the hands of Theeves, and would have feared no accidents : he replied soberly, that such Arguments do arise from the warmth and faction of debate, never are supplied out of the innocence of sleepe. I beseech you ( said the other scornfully ) what medicine have you since applyed to your self, for the recovery of your rest : Repentance, saith he, and resolution to be madde no more. It had been well, said the other, you had slept first, for now me thinks this resolution seems but an effect of your madnesse. I am content ( he replied with an angry smile ) you should thinke so, but when you come home, recollect all that I have said to you this day, and if I am not deceived, you will change your minde too. He hath been as good as his word,  
you



you never saw such an alteration in a man, such a sadnesse and damp of spirit, and he protested to me yesterday, if a peace were not concluded speedily, we should have our Christianity suspected, and be beaten out of all places with stones by the people.

Sir, trust me, it concerns you, it concerns us all, that you finde some way to quiet and compose these distractions. It is not the name of a Parliament, of evill Counsellours, Malignant Cavaliers, and other hard words will keep the people longer asleepe to their own ruine: you may remember the Counsell-Table, yea, and the Star-Chamber too, names of reverence, but when they left their Justice, they lost their reputation, neither was Ship-money grievous, because it was a supply to the King, (Let us not deceive our selves, Englishmen naturally love their King, and what starts soever they may make, will retire into their loyalty, to the ruine of their seducers;) but because it did, or might take more from them then they were willing or able to spare, and what power soever doth, or endeavours to do the same things, will have the same face in the affections of the people.

Do you thinke the condition of the poore Countrey-man hath not suffered a sad alteration, from a State (in which you found him) wherein he knew what was his own, and was not capable of any violence, for which he was not sure of a remedy and reparation, to this wherein he receives commands under the penalty of plundering and hanging, from persons of whom he never heard, for Horses, for Money, for personall attendance, of which, as he can finde no ground, so he can hope for no end, and sees the twentieth part of his estate taken from

him, to continue and maintain a calamity, which makes  
all the rest of no use to him? I say again, no cunning, war,  
and industry will longer bewitch the people to this folly  
and sacrifice.

A blunt neighbour of mine told me yesterday, that the Parliament had ill luck, to discountenance all men, whose Willoms, Justice, and Charity, the Country could confide in; and confided in none so much as in those who are only known by the ill they have heretofore done; and asked me whether my Lord Shaftesbury, *Peckham*, and *Holmes* were not like to be precious Instruments of Reformation. I answered, Great Councils were not to be undervalued by the mischiefs or unworthiness of some of their members. He replied, 'Twas true, when the Councils justified themselves; but 'twas time to look upon the particular persons; when nothing was said in defence of the Actions, but the power and reputation of the Actors.

These I shrink not to meet with, even with those, who when you and I parted, were in the Catalogue of your followers. If there be the same alteration in other places, on my word it will not be long in your power to make to good an end of these troubles, as now it is. For Gods will call up all that is of piety and generosity about you, and if there be anything I have said move

you, impart it to our friends in that town, which  
 is, our joy at your escape we are for you,  
 a happy restoration.

and find less the twentieth part of his class take from which, as he confide no ground, so he can hope for no for Horles, for Mead. Not personally attendance, of thing and hanging from parties of whom he never heard, which he gives commands upon the penalty of punishment.